

**METHOD AND SYSTEM FOR INTERLEAVING OCR AND ABL FOR  
AUTOMATED MAIL SORTING**

**Abstract of the Disclosure**

5 A method and system for automated sorting machines is provided in which a  
feedback between OCR and ABL takes place. According to a first aspect of the present  
invention, a loose coupling between ABL and OCR is proposed in which the ABL system  
is asked for a further address block potentially present on the letter's surface when the  
first one being passed from ABL to OCR yielded that no destination ZIP code could be  
10 extracted from it. The confidence of the actual OCR and the ABL result, the address  
block contents supplemented with some additional criteria based on general knowledge,  
further, the sort plan actually loaded on the concerned sorting machine and the postmark  
information found in the stamps of the postmark can advantageously be used to make the  
ABL restart decision. Further, the ABL system can continue to search further address  
15 blocks while the OCR system processes one or a plurality of address blocks being passed  
to it from ABL in a preceding procedure related to the same letter. After being processed  
by the OCR procedure, a summarizing ranking is calculated for each potential address  
block found. The best rank is given for the most probable destination address block. In  
this 'tight' coupling of ABL and OCR processes, basically the same criteria as mentioned  
above can be used.

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